DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 230 062 FL 013 741

TITLE English Teaching Profile: Greece.
INSTITUTION British Council, London (England). English Language and Literature Div.
PUB DATE Nov 82
NOTE 9p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Policy; *English (Second Language); Foreign Countries; Instructional Materials; Language Role; Language Teachers; Language Usage; *Second Language Instruction
IDENTIFIERS *Greece

ABSTRACT

The role and status of English instruction in Greece is outlined. The role of English and English language instruction in the country as a whole, English instruction within the educational system, availability and training of English teachers, textbook selection and use, educational administration of English teaching, English instruction development and planning, English instruction outside the educational system, British and American support for English instruction in Greece, commercial opportunities for British involvement in English instruction, and the status of English research are reported. English is taught in secondary schools, universities, and private commercial language schools, and its popularity as a second language in Greece is increasing. (RW)

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ENGLISH TEACHING PROFILE

Country: Greece **Date: November 1982**

This English Teaching Profile must be seen as an interim document. Changes have been promised in all sectors of Greek life, including education. They may well be drastic; some of those proposed have already caused dissension.

What changes will in fact be made are still unknown. It may well be that much of the information in this Profile will soon be out of date. No decisions are being made at present, on any matter, without the decision of Ministers themselves.

Hence this Profile, as well as being read in conjunction with updated versions of the Education Profile, must constantly be qualified by the phrase 'at present'.

1. ROLE AND STATUS OF ENGLISH

The motivation in Greece towards the learning and use of foreign languages, English in particular, may be gauged from the fact that, in addition to the normal provision made by public sector education, there are several thousands of privately maintained language institutes (frontistiria). These, of widely different quality and size, testify to a widespread desire on the part of the general population.

The mainsprings of this motivation can be specified without great difficulty:- the priority of English for international communication and in a variety of fields, academic and other; traditional ties in a number of sectors - not least of which is the Navy and Mercantile Marine - with British influence dating back a considerable number of years and now reinforced by extensive political, military and economic contact with NATO and the USA; the furtherance of general commercial interest linked to Greece's entry to the European Community; and the importance to the Greek economy of a rapidly expanding tourist industry in which the use of English plays a major role.

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These factors have combined to produce the present trend of language learning which has supplanted that of the preceding generations for whom French, and to a lesser extent German, held pride of place. From this stems an interesting language dichotomy that characterises life in many parts of Greece now, especially in the urban centres: while the young and more recent generations will readily accept and use English, communication with persons of more advanced

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years is generally found to be more easily conducted in French.
On the whole, though standards vary widely across the country and there are many imperfections within the state provision for the learning of English, there is no doubt that in Greece English language teaching is big business, in many cases with the emphasis decidedly on business.

Nevertheless, except for a few private schools, English is not used as a medium of instruction nor even widely as a study language.

2. ENGLISH WITHIN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

English is not taught in any of the state primary schools or kindergartens.

In the secondary schools students must choose between English and French for a compulsory modern language. However, choice is dictated by teacher availability; no schools offer both languages and some offer neither. Emphasis is clearly on English, however, and this is reflected by the demand for this language in private sector schools. Students are allocated between two and three hours a week on the timetable, depending on the type of school and the year in which it is taught. A class-hour is approximately of 45 minutes duration.

The aims of teaching English, as laid down by the Ministry of Education, are:

a. to enable pupils to understand spoken English with ease, to read English texts fluently and with full comprehension, and to speak and write correctly in the language;

b. to develop pupils' interest in the culture and civilisation of English-speaking nations;

c. to cultivate in the pupils a love and respect for English literature and science, and to stimulate them to study and learn English classics.

The universities too are responsible to the Ministry of Education. Only Athens and Salonica have English departments wherein both language, literature and linguistics are studied. The last two years of the four-year course also include some theory in ELT methodology. There is no teaching practice. No institution offers a specialised first degree in English studies, and students must also take some classical subjects.

Nearly all universities - Salonica, Patras, Crete, Ioannina, Thrace - have some kind of service English programme, with varying degrees of organisation and effectiveness. The British Council is actively concerned with responding to requests for cooperation in this sector.

Responsibility for syllabuses and textbooks in secondary schools lies with the Ministry of Education. Teachers may choose books from the official list compiled by the Ministry. In the universities, the syllabus is determined by the School of Philosophy. Texts are issued free to students in all sectors of the state system.

A pass in English is not classed as a requirement for promotion within the secordary level nor for entrance to university. Consequently, motivation is low. There are moves within the Ministry of Education to change this state of affairs.

There are two Inspectors of English in Greece. Between them they have to inspect the nation's 1,500 teachers of English at work, make annual reports on them which will form part of their assesment for promotion, and ensure that syllabuses are strictly adhered to. Both of them assist in organising yearly in-service courses and seminars in collaboration with the British Council. There may be changes, soon, in the nature of the Inspectors' role so that it becomes more advisory.

3. TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

Teachers of English in the state system must be Greek nationals, and must be graduates of the English departments of Athens or Salonica universities or an acceptable foreign equivalent. There are about 1,500 teachers of English in the public sector. The universities employ expatriate staff only through such agencies as the British Council or the Fulbright Foundation: the number of these is decreasing.

Pre-service training for state teachers is limited to the methodology component of the English courses run by the Universities of Athens and Salonica. Classes are large with no practical training. In-service training is confined to the seminars and summer schools organised in Greece by the British Council and the Hellenic-American Union in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. Each year several teachers attend summer schools in Britain either at their own expense or with assistance from the British Council. There are in-service courses for an extremely limited number of senior teachers destined for higher posts: the British Council organises the ELT methodology component of these courses.

In the private sector, teachers must either have a degree in English or possess a language qualification. The University of Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE) or the University of Michigan Certificate of Proficiency in English are usually accepted. Private schools may employ expatriate teachers of English as long as they form no more than one-fifth of the total teaching staff. The qualification for expatriates must be a degree in a relevant subject. Employers must obtain a work permit and residence permit before expatriates are allowed in the country. There are also many individuals, of all nationalities, who teach English by way of private lessons. Many of them are unqualified and therefore operate illegally.

The qualifications demanded of private sector teachers show that little training is required. It is up to individual institutions to select teachers with professional qualifications, training and experience. The British Council assists the private sector by running one-semester practical courses giving an introduction to ELT methodology; seminars on particular areas for groups of schools; and the Royal Society of Arts Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language for native-speakers.

Professional organisations for teachers of English are greatly outnumbered by organisations for owners of private schools. The Cultural Association of Teachers of English (CATE) is the local affiliate of the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL). This Association has, since its inception in 1973, been supported by the Council. It produces an ELT journal and holds regular meetings. It organised the IATEFL International Conference in Athens in January 1981. Another organisation is TESOL, Greece (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), which was begun in May 1980. The Pan-Hellenic Association of Language School Owners

- a body of employers - is largely concerned with defending the commercial interests of its members. However, it does organise one annual convention with teachers, discussions on methodology, textbooks etc.

PEKADE is a recently formed association of state teachers of English. It publishes a journal, Aspects. It is slowly growing in strength, having links with the Ministry of Education and the British Council.

4. MATERIALS SUPPORT

There is a huge market for textbooks at all levels. Books are freely available in the leading bookshops. Most leading British ELT publishers maintain a British representative on the spot.

At secondary level in the public sector, schools must select from the prescribed list. At higher levels, different texts may be prescribed from year to year. In the private sector, the problem is how to select from the vast range available: publishers' representatives are active here in giving demonstrations of the potentialities of their wares.

Other instructional materials are used randomly. Cassette-recorders are used, in both the public and private sector, often against the wishes of school managers or owners. Some private schools have video-equipment but little or no software.

A number of ELT textbooks have been produced locally. These are used mostly in the private sector and institutes and are not usually selected by schools in the public sector.

The list of books recommended by the Ministry is amended each year.

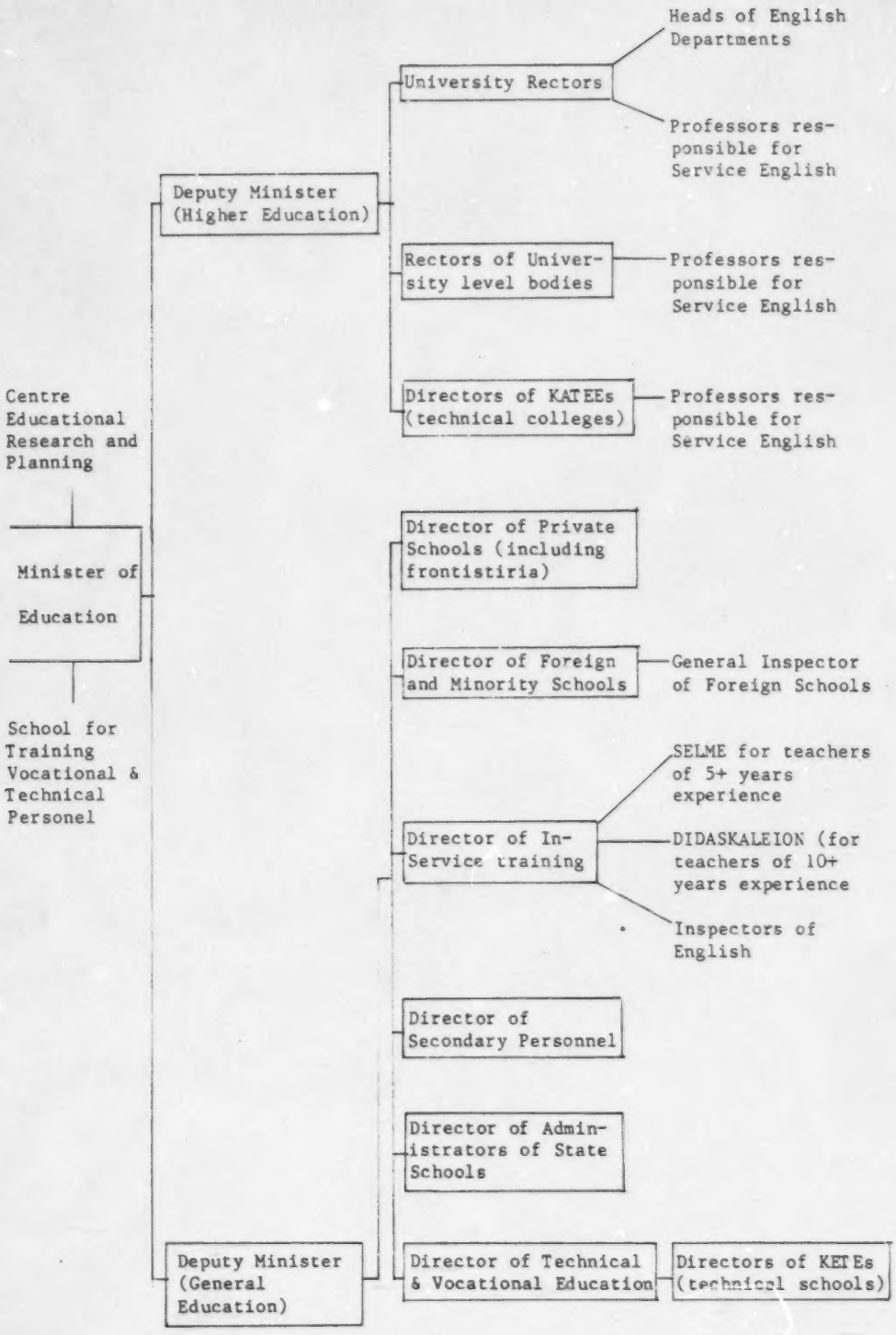
5. EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN RELATION TO ENGLISH TEACHING

All educational administration in English Language teaching ultimately devolves upon the Ministry of Education. This Section, therefore, should be read in conjunction with the corresponding section of the Education Profile.

It cannot be stressed too much that the present is very much a transitory period and that the diagram below may become out-of-date overnight. It should be noted that the Minister and Deputy Ministers now take all decisions on all matters. Directors, in the absence of a codified policy, refer all decisions upwards.

6. DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING OF THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

Development has been haphazard and unplanned. Present objectives await definition. Institutions responsible for planning, such as the Centre for Educational Research and Planning (KEME) are in some doubt as to their own future. Policies and objectives, in both the short and long run, will be set by the Deputy Ministers of Education. In short, there are no present trends and no currently favoured educational policy. All planning of any sort has been suspended until such time as official policy emerges.


Heads of English Departments
University Rectors
Professors responsible for Service English
Deputy Minister (Higher Education)
Rectors of University level bodies
Professors responsible for Service English
Directors of KATEEs (technical colleges)
Professors responsible for Service English
Centre Educational Research and Planning
Director of Private Schools (including frontistiria)
Minister of Education
Director of Foreign and Minority Schools
General Inspector of Foreign Schools
School for Training Vocational & Technical Personel
SELME for teachers of 5+ years experience
Director of In-Service training
DIDASKALEION (for teachers of 10+ years experience
Inspectors of English
Director of Secondary Personnel
Director of Administrators of State Schools
Deputy Minister (General Education)
Director of Technical & Vocational Education
Directors of KETEs (technical schools)

7. ENGLISH OUTSIDE THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

There is a very large number of private commercial schools of English in Greece which cater for learners at all levels and ages - sometimes in the same class. The quality varies enormously from the good to the appallingly bad. Their size also varies, from one organisation with branches all over the country to one-man one-room operators. The biggest, of course, are not always the best. Many enter students for the Cambridge and Michigan examinations; there are approximately 20,000 entries for Cambridge FCE and CPE in 1982. Others enter for lower level but reputable examinations, and others produce their own certificates. There were moves to establish a Greek-based examination among the school-owners in 1980 and several thousand students took the examination. However, there is little enthusiasm for this from the Ministry of Education or anyone else professionally interested.

There are, in addition, several independent schools teaching largely to the expatriate community. These all have GCE sections and are largely staffed by expatriates. Normally, Greek nationals are not allowed to attend these schools.

There are a few private schools of varying quality that teach business and commercial English. Outside these schools, businesses often provide training for their own staff, and the British Council is heavily engaged in ESP programmes (English for a Specific Purpose) for several companies, banks and industrial ventures.

Greece enters approximately 20,000 candidates a year for the Cambridge Certificate examinations. Examination centres are established in Athens, Salonica, Patras, Kalamata, Crete (Chania and Irakleion), Mytilene, Corfu, Chios, Rhodes and Tripolis. Cambridge qualifications are very popular and of high prestige; the Certificate of Proficiency is an officially recognised qualification for teaching posts in private schools.

There are also centres for several GCE boards in Greece. The University of London GCE is organised by the British Council; for other GCE examinations the Associated Examining Board (AEB) and the University of Cambridge have their own local agents.

8. BRITISH SUPPORT FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

The British Council centres in Athens and Salonica have large direct teaching operations. There is a Director of Studies in both centres, with two Assistant Directors of Studies in Athens. In addition, there are about 80 teachers of English, all locally-engaged. Classes teach towards Cambridge examinations. There are special courses for civil servants (nearly 1,000 students in 1982) and for commerce and banking. There is also a large teacher-training component (see Section 3).

The British Council also supports the English Department at Salonica University by providing a full-time lecturer and three part-time lecturers in English literature.

The British Council, through its English Language Officer, advises University Service English Departments; private schools; the Ministry of Education (see Section 3) and other Ministries on ELT methodology, syllabus design and materials production.

Teacher training is almost wholly the preserve of the Universities of Athens and Salonica English Departments and of the British Council. Britain is seen as the main source of knowledge and expertise. One or two private language schools have arrangements for teacher-training seminars with British language schools. There is scope for more opportunity here, although costs will limit this to the larger schools or chains of schools.

When information and advice is sought, it is done through the British Council. The commercial factor looms large in Greek language teaching institutions, and it is assumed that there must be unworthy ulterior motives behind British language schools that offer information and advice.

There is a constant demand for language courses in Britain, both full-time and summer schools. Because of foreign exchange problems, these are handled by tourist agencies in Greece. The British Council gives information about language courses in Britain. A British language school wishing to attract Greek customers is strongly advised to contact travel agents; promotional literature is not enough. In the present economic climate it is not certain if this activity will increase or decrease.

12. CREATIVE WRITING

There are no Greeks of any repute producing literature in English. There are no writers' associations or workshops for creative writing in English and no literary societies dedicated to British writers, even Lord Byron. There are no literary prizes for original work in English. Any publishing activity is either in ELT or consists of translations into Greek of Agatha Christie, Mills & Boon authors, etc.

13. CURRENT RESEARCH

There is no organised programme of postgraduate work in the universities and unlikely to be any for some time to come. Libraries are inadequate or non-existent for research purposes, in universities and nationally.

Any research is done on an individual basis: there are no projects or investigations in progress.

Professor Gina Politi of the University of Salonica has an international reputation in the field of the English novel.

There are informal links with British universities, depending on the training of individual staff members. Professor Politi with Cambridge; Professor Efstathiades with Edinburgh and Lancaster; Dr Lytra and Dr Dendrinou with London University Institute of Education.

In 1981-82 there were four ELT Specialist Tourists from the British Council; one Hornby Scholar; and one British Council scholarship in the field of English studies as well as thirty bursaries for British Council ELT summer schools.

A large number of British teachers are employed in frontistiria througout the country. They are recruited locally or from Britain or the Commonwealth. These teachers are sometimes unqualified. Several British teachers are also recruited by private schools.

The bulk of teaching materials originates from Britain. It is widely recognised that Britain leads the field in ELT expertise, and the British Council and British publishers are constantly in touch with schools.

The British Council each year awards about thirty bursaries and two scholarships to lecturers, teachers of English and civil servants to follow summer schools in Britain.

9. AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

The Fulbright Foundation provides limited help in ELT personnel at both Athens and Salonica Universities.

The Hellenic-American Union in Athens is a large teaching establishment that is registered as a frontistirion. It offers round-the-year courses in English and is predominantly concerned with the Michigan Certificate of Proficiency examinations. It has also assisted the Ministry of Education with teacher-training summer schools; this assistance may not continue.

Athens and Pierce Colleges are American foundations that follow the Greek gymnasium syllabus. On the English language side they are staffed by expatriates. Both colleges have a high educational status. Athens College is a GCE centre. Pierce has an affiliate - Deree College - that offers undergraduate courses though these are not recognised by the Greek government.

10. OTHER AGENCY SUPPORT

Greece is not an aid-receiving country. It does have links with international agencies, including the United Nations and the European Community. Where United Nations programmes or courses require English as the medium of instruction, or where EC links require the use of English, there are no programmes of instruction other than those provided by the British Council. There is potential, although not strong, for closer cooperation but lack of administrative deadlines and planning impose severe limits on this.

11. COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

The great demand for English and the high status of Britain as a source of ELT expertise have created large commercial opportunities for British ELT services. In particular books and other software are in such high favour that most leading British ELT publishers have a representative in Athens.

British examinations are in high demand - over 20,000 people a year take the University of Cambridge First Certificate in English (FCE). The GCE, too, is taken by private schools in Greece. Other British examinations are sat for, but foreign exchange problems limit those not organised through the British Council.